

POSC 39063
Michael Strausz

Interviews and Ethnography in Political Science
Fall 2022

course time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:20

classroom: Rees-Jones 214

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response time: I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours during weekends and holidays.

Final Paper Due Date

For non-degree candidates (i.e., everyone except graduating seniors), final research papers are due on Thursday, **December 15 at 4:30pm**. For degree candidates (graduating seniors), final research papers are due on Monday, **December 12 at 4:30**.

Course Description

This course introduces you to two related qualitative research methodologies—interview research and ethnography—as used in social sciences in general and in political science in particular. Although these two research methodologies differ in a number of important ways, what unites them is that in order to use them well, the researcher is required to have long, open-ended conversations with research subjects.

Surveys requires the researcher to ask a research subject questions like "would you describe yourself as very liberal, liberal, moderate, conservative, or very conservative?" and to then represent the research subjects' answers in a manner that can be analyzed statistically. However, interview research and ethnography both require researchers to ask questions like "what are your most important political beliefs and why?" and then to *carefully listen to the research subject's answer*. Indeed, as one develops skill as an ethnographer and/or interview researcher, one also becomes a better listener.

Course Objectives

After taking this class you will be able to:

1. Summarize and critically evaluate political science research written for professional political scientists, including research that uses ethnography and interviews
2. Develop good empirical research questions
3. Design an original research project that uses either interview research or ethnography
4. Conduct research using either interview research or ethnography
5. Draw valid inferences from social science research
6. Write a research report that combines review of others' research on your topic, discussion of your contribution to that topic, discussion of your research methodology, and discussion of your research findings
7. Speak confidently and clearly before an audience of your peers about your research project
- 8.

Required Texts

You are also required to have the following text for the duration of the class. Both electronic and hard copies will work:

Lareau, Annette. 2021. *Listening to People: A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing it All Up*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This book is in the [bookstore](#), and you can also order it from online book sellers (the paperback is fine). If the cost of buying or renting this text is too much for you, please contact me as soon as you can to discuss alternatives.

All other required readings are available on the course's D2L page. I encourage you to print up that day's reading and bring it to class. If you have run out of free prints from TCU and/or don't have another way to print, please come to my office!

Course Policies and Requirements

Assignments

Reading discussion questions (5% of final grade): Every day with an assigned reading, students are required to post a discussion question about the reading on the relevant threaded discussion on D2L. Discussion questions are due at 9am on the morning that we discuss that reading. Late discussion questions will receive no credit.

Satisfactory discussion questions will earn you a 100 for that assignment. A discussion question is satisfactory when it demonstrates that you have done the reading and thought about it a bit. Satisfactory questions might be about the overall theme of the reading, about a specific example or quote from the reading, about the implications of the findings and/or methods, etc. Anything is on the table, as long as it is thoughtful, based on the reading, and demonstrates that you are thinking critically about the issues raised by the reading and the course. If you find yourself struggling to understand the reading, you are always welcome to come to my office hours or make an appointment.

If your discussion questions suggest that many of you are not doing the assigned reading, I will give pop quizzes on the readings that will be averaged into this grade. I may also assign a short homework assignments and in-class assignments that will be averaged into this grade.

You can skip up to two days of posting questions without penalty, but after that, late submission of questions and failure to submit questions at all will result in a grade of zero for that day.

In-class reflections (5% of final grade): At the end of each class session, students will have a few minutes to write one to three sentences on one of these questions:

1. What is something that you learned today?
2. What is the muddiest point for you from today's class?
3. What is something that we touched on today that you want to learn more about?

If students miss a class, they should log in to D2L before the next class to give a brief explanation of why they missed class. These explanations might include "I was sick," "my sister got married," "I was having some family issues," etc. I respect your privacy, so I do not need details in your explanations (no need to tell me about what kind of illness or doctor's appointment, for example).

For each day that a student fills out a genuine reflection on the class or explanation for why he or she missed class, that student will get full credit (a 100). Failure to complete a day's prompt will result in a grade of 0 for that day.

Two review essays (each worth 10% of final grade): Throughout the course, we will read a number of articles and chapters by professional political scientists that use interviews or ethnographic methods. You will be required to write two papers of approximately 500 words in which you review the use of those methods in those readings. These papers will be due at the beginning of the class in which we discuss that reading. You will have to turn in your first paper by **September 29**, and your second by **November 10**. You are welcome to write both papers before September 29 if you would like to get done early. A specific assignment and grading rubric will be distributed early in the semester.

CITI Training for Human Subjects Researchers (2.5% of your final grade): All students in this class are required to complete CITI Training for Human Subjects Researchers online. This is due by the beginning of class on **Tuesday, September 20**. To prove that you have completed the training, upload your Completion Certificate to the relevant assignment submission folder. Late uploads will be accepted with penalty (10 points per day late), but even if students wait more than 10 days to upload the Completion Certificate, and thus earn no credit for the upload, students must upload a Completion Certificate in order to be permitted to turn in a research design, "raw data," the evidence/analysis section of your paper, your final paper, and to make an oral presentation of your research findings. In other words, if you do not take the CITI training for Human Subjects Researchers, you will not be able to pass the class. There is information about how to access the training on the course's D2L site.

Research project: the majority of your grade for this class will be a research project in which you use either interview research or ethnography to examine a political science topic that interests you. The research project has seven components (specific assignments for each will be distributed as the semester progresses):

<i>Item</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Percent of course grade</i>	<i>Length</i>
An introduction that specifies the research question you will be answering and why it is important	9/6	5%	1-2 pages
A literature review that discusses what other scholars have said about your topic	10/4	5%	4-6 pages

<i>Item</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Percent of course grade</i>	<i>Length</i>
A research design that specifics what you will do and why	10/20	5%	3-5 pages
"Raw data" (field notes or interview transcripts; due Monday, March 30): 2.5%	11/1	2.5%	2-5 pages
Evidence/analysis of your raw data (along with your introduction, literature, review, and research design)	11/16	10%	8-12 pages
Final paper	12/15 ¹	30%	15-25 pages
Oral presentation of research findings	11/17-12/1	10%	7-9 minutes

Grade Breakdown

Reading discussion questions: 5%

In-class reflections: 5%

First review essay: 10%

Second review essay: 10%

Complete the CITI training for Human Subjects Researchers (due **Tuesday, September 20**): 2.5%

Research project (worth a total of 67.5% of your final grade):

Introduction (due **Tuesday, September 6**): 5%

Literature review (due **Tuesday, October 4**): 5%

Research design (due **Thursday, October 20**): 5%

"Raw data" (due **Tuesday, November 1**): 2.5%

Evidence/analysis (due **Tuesday, November 15**): 10%

Final paper (due **Tuesday, December 15 at 4:30pm**)²: 30%

Oral presentation of research findings: 10%

If you feel that you have been graded unfairly on any course assignment, please wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned and then contact me with a typed statement about why you believe you were graded unfairly. This statement must provide substantive reasons why you believe that you were graded unfairly. The appeal process must be started one week after the material was returned.

Extra Credit

If I decide to establish extra credit opportunities, the specifics will be announced in class, posted on D2L, and/or emailed out to all students enrolled in the class. So, come to class, check D2L, and check your TCU email regularly.

¹ The paper is due at 4:30pm. For graduating seniors, the deadline is Monday, December 12 at 4:30pm.

² For graduating seniors, the deadline is Monday, December 12 at 4:30pm.

Late Work

In general, late assignments lose 10 points (out of 100) per 24 hours late. So, if a paper is due at 2:00pm on Tuesday and you turn it in at 4:00pm, you will lose 10 points. And if you turn it in after 3:30pm on Wednesday, you will lose 20 points, (and after 3:30 on Thursday, you will lose 30 points... etc.). However, if you miss or are late in submitting any assignment because of an Official University Absence, an illness, or a personal or family emergency, please communicate with me as soon as you can we can discuss rescheduling your work. You don't have to tell me the nature of the illness or emergency; just let me know that you are dealing with an illness or an emergency and we can discuss an alternate deadline for your work.

Office Hours

I encourage students to take advantage of my office hours in order to ask questions about the course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. While you are free to drop by without an appointment, if you want to make sure that I will be available right when you drop by, please feel free to sign up for an appointment (there is a link on D2L). If you prefer to meet over Zoom, please let me know and I will send you a link. If I am not able to hold in-person office hours at any point, I will email the class and temporarily move office hours to Zoom. If you have classes or other obligations during my office hours and would like to meet with me, please email me to make an appointment.

PowerPoint Slides

Most days in class I will have PowerPoint slides that have three purposes:

1. The slides are meant to help you organize your notes, by showing you what we are discussing and when.
2. The slides might include quotes and/or questions that we will discuss in class.
3. The slides might include photographs, maps, animations, and other types of images to help illuminate class concepts.

The slides are not a transcript of everything that I plan to say in class; they are meant to help you take notes. You will be able to download slides before class (I will have them online a few minutes before class starts) and they will stay up for the whole semester. If you miss a class, you should download the slides, but you should also borrow notes from a classmate. Once you have looked over the notes that you borrowed, feel free to ask me about any points you want clarification on.

Technology Policy

Students wishing to use computers, tablets, or smartphones to take notes in class are requested to use those devices only for class related purposes. I know how tempting it can be to use an electronic device for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Ravelry (the knitting social networking site), Instagram, TikTok, games, and other fun distractions, but if I catch a student doing so, that student will no longer be permitted to bring his or her electronic device to class. Remember that your primary responsibility at

TCU is to learn. If you don't trust yourself to avoid online distractions, I encourage you to take notes with a pen or pencil. If I catch you using an electronic device for non-class related purposes during class, you will lose permission to use that device in class for the rest of the semester. Students wishing to make audio or video recordings of classes are required to see me to discuss acceptable use of those recordings and to sign a contract indicating that you will use those recordings responsibly. In the absence of written permission, you are not permitted to make audio or video recordings of classes.

TCU Policies

This course will be conducted in accordance with all relevant TCU policies. For specific language, please see the syllabus appendix on the course's D2L site. The syllabus appendix includes the following policies: Academic Misconduct, Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Information, TCU Policy for Religious Observations & Holidays, and Student Access and Accommodation.

Daily Schedule

Date	Theme and assigned reading
23-Aug	<i>Introduction</i> No assigned reading.
Unit 1: Qualitative research in a quantitative world	
25-Aug	<i>The cult of KKV</i> King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. "The Science in Social Science." In <i>Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research</i> . Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
30-Aug	<i>A reply to KKV</i> Collier, David, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright. 2004. "Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology." In <i>Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards</i> , edited by Henry E. Brady and David Collier, Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
1-Sep	<i>The emergent nature of the research process</i> Lareau, pp. 1-10 (Chapter 1).
6-Sep	<i>An example of ethnography</i> Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. "The Contours of Rural Consciousness." In <i>the Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <u>Research project introduction due at the beginning of class</u>
8-Sep	<i>An example of interview research</i> Strausz, Michael. 2019. "The Crow is White: Foreign Labor and the Japanese State." In <i>Help (Not) Wanted: Immigration Politics in Japan</i> . Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Date	Theme and assigned reading
13-Sep	<i>Before you begin and preparing</i> Lareau, pp. 11-59 (Chapters 2 and 3).
Unit 2: Ethical issues in qualitative research on human subjects	
15-Sep	<i>How to find useful library resources for your final paper</i> No assigned reading. <u>Guest lecturer: Robyn Reid, TCU Social Science Librarian</u>
20-Sep	<i>Ethics in research</i> Daku, Mark. 2018. "Ethics beyond ethics: the need for virtuous researchers." <i>BMC medical ethics</i> 19 (1):42. <u>Take online CITI training by the beginning of class (see D2L for link)</u>
22-Sep	<i>Ethics in ethnography</i> Ellis, Carolyn. 1995. "Emotional and Ethical Quagmires in Returning to the Field." <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 24 (1):68-98.
Unit 3: How to do ethnographies and interviews	
27-Sep	<i>Learning to interview</i> Lareau, pp. 60-90 (Chapter 4).
29-Sep	<i>Interview research about public opinion among Black college students</i> Simpson, Andrea Y. 1998. "The Conservatives, Part 1: The Republican Race Men." In <i>The Tie That Binds: Identity and Political Attitudes in the Post-Civil Rights Generation</i> . New York: New York University Press, pp. 29-54.
4-Oct	<i>How to conduct a good interview</i> Lareau, pp. 91-139 (chapter 5). <u>Literature review due at the beginning of class</u>
6-Oct	<u>FALL BREAK</u>
11-Oct	<i>A pandemic ethnography</i> Horton, Sarah Bronwen. 2021. "On Pandemic Privilege: Reflections on a 'Home-Bound Pandemic Ethnography.'" <i>Journal for the Anthropology of North America</i> 24 (2):8-107.
13-Oct	<i>Learning to do participant observation</i> Lareau, pp. 140-162 (Chapter 6).
18-Oct	<u>CLASS IS CANCELLED</u>

Date	Theme and assigned reading
20-Oct	<i>Writing high quality field notes</i> Lareau, pp. 163-194 (Chapter 7).
	<u>Research design due at the beginning of class</u>
25-Oct	<i>An ethnography of Japan</i> Ikeuchi, Suma. 2019. "Of Two Bloods." In <i>Jesus Loves Japan: Return Migration and Global Pentecostalism in a Brazilian Diaspora</i> . Stanford: Stanford University Press.
	Unit 4: Becoming Qualitative Researchers
27-Oct	<i>Data analysis</i> Lareau, pp. 195-225 (Chapter 8).
1-Nov	<i>Field notes/interview transcript workshop</i> No assigned reading.
	<u>Field notes/interview transcript due at the beginning of class</u>
3-Nov	<i>Writing</i> Lareau, pp. 226-259 (Chapter 9).
8-Nov	<i>An interview study of drone strikes</i> Shah, Aqil. 2018. "Do US Drone Strikes Cause Blowback? Evidence from Pakistan and Beyond." <i>International Security</i> 42 (04): 47-84.
10-Nov	<i>Ethnography and nuclear war</i> Cohn, Carol. 1987. "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals." <i>Signs</i> 12 (4):687-718.
15-Nov	<i>Why interviews and ethnography are valuable</i> Lareau, pp. 260-265 (Conclusion and Final Words)
17-Nov	<i>Presentations</i> No assigned reading.
22-Nov- 24-Nov	<u>THANKSGIVING BREAK</u>
29-Nov	<i>Presentations</i> No assigned reading.
1-Dec	<i>Presentations</i> No assigned reading.

Date	Theme and assigned reading
6-Dec	<i>Qualitative research in a quantitative world: reprise</i> No assigned reading, bring paper drafts to class
15-Dec	<u>Final draft of research paper due at 4:30pm for non-degree candidates (degree candidate papers due on December 12 at 4:30pm)</u>